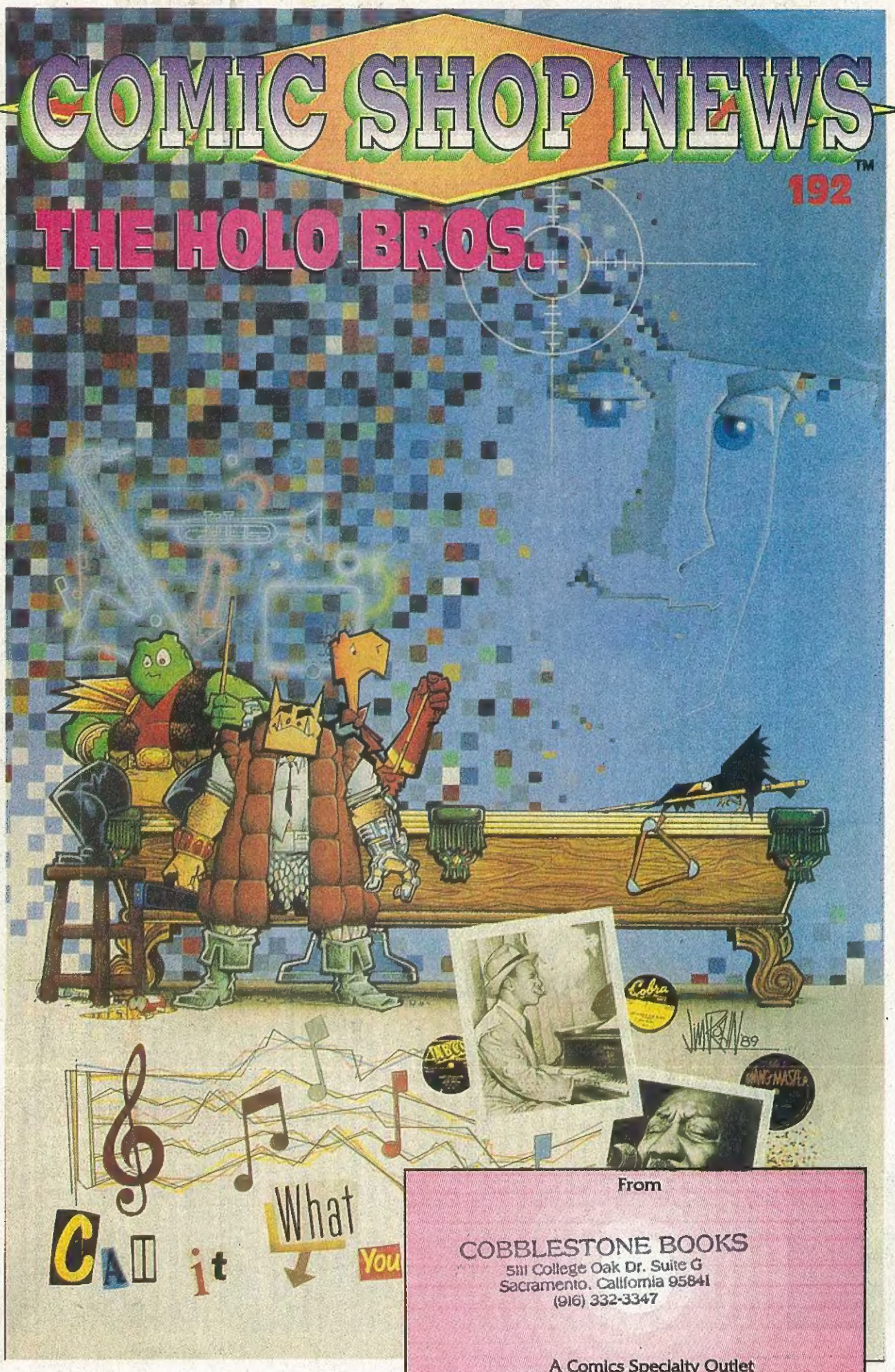

From

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A Comics Specialty Outlet

Monster Comics Features New Holo Graphics

The Holo Brothers, previous stars of their own graphic novel and one-shot for Fantagraphics, will return in a new series published by Fantagraphics' imprint Monster Comics. ***The Holo Brothers*** is a ten-issue series written and illustrated by **Jim Rohn** that Monster Comics describes as being "as layered as the city of six hundred floors where it takes place." Each issue of this off-beat science fiction adventure series will feature full color painted covers and 24 pages of black and white interior art for $1.95. ***Holo Brothers #1*** is scheduled for February release.

by CLIFF BIGGERS

Sinbad Lookin' Good for Second Voyage

Sinbad, the legendary hero who came to comics last year courtesy of Adventure Comics, is ready to set sail on a second voyage this year--and his crew will consist of the same writer and penciller who accompanied him the first time out.

"We're always very proud when a book of the quality of ***Sinbad Book One*** does as well as it did," Adventure publisher Dave Olbrich said of Sinbad's initial success. "In a market where high quality doesn't necessarily dictate high sales, ***Sinbad Book One*** proved to be the exception."

R.A. Jones and M.C. Wyman, the pair responsible for Sinbad's initial series, will

be joined by new inker Andre Parks for ***Sinbad Book Two: Sinbad In the House of God.*** "I was delighted to get the chance to work with M.C. again, because I thought he did a terrific job on both the first series and ***Pistolero*** [a western one-shot the two also produced]," Jones said.

The series begins with a frame story in which Shahrazad is accused by her husband, King Sharizar, of being unfaithful. Shahrazad tells the tale of Sinbad's mission to rescue the Caliph's kidnapped wife, Lady Aziza--Sinbad's true love and the cause of his four trials in the first series. "I wanted to further explore the relationship between Sinbad and Aziza," Jones said. "It's the one that appeals to the romantic in me." The new mission pits Sinbad against sea serpents, insane holy men, the embodiment of the elder gods, a vindictive genie, and more.

"It was the rogue character of Sinbad himself, developed in the first series, that made me want to do another," Jones said. "I didn't want to just stop at one of his stories. I really like the guy!"

Sinbad #1 is scheduled for March release. The 32-page black-and-white comic with color covers by Felipe Echevarria is priced at $2.50.

by ALEX KIRKLAND

COMIC SHOP NEWS™

192 2 • 27 • 91

Samurai Cat Offers Martial Arts Fans the Whole Kitten Kaboodle

"What If Heathcliff were Japanese and had an attitude?" Marvel Direct Sales Assistant Manager Skip Dietz asks rhetorically. "Why, you'd have ***Samurai Cat***, of course!"

Samurai Cat is already well-known to fantasy fans who have seen his adventures on the shelves of bookstores everywhere. Written and illustrated by Mark Rogers, the original ***Samurai Cat*** books have been a cult favorite with fans of funny animals, martial arts adventures, and heroic fantasy. Now, thanks to Marvel's Epic imprint, ***Samurai Cat*** will be a favorite of comics fans as well.

Reminiscent in tone and approach to Stan Sakai's ***Usagi Yojimbo***, Samurai Cat is also at times reminiscent of such samurai epics as ***Lone Wolf and Cub*** and ***The Seven Samurai.*** It's the story of feline samurai Miaowara Tomakato, who seeks vengeance for the murder of Lord Nobunaga. His nemesis is Fugu Otoko, the Blowfish Who Never Smiles. The adventure element isn't the core of the story, though. "The key words here are fun and satire," Dietz said, "as the story is a tongue-in-cheek take-off on samurai-type mayhem and Conan-style action adventure, with a little Mutant Turtle-type humor thrown in."

Marvel has brought in some top art talent for the ***Samurai Cat*** three-issue limited series. Frank Cirocco, well known to Marvel fans for his work on ***Alien Legion,*** will pencil the series; he will be joined by inker Jim Hummel. Ralph Macchio, who adapted ***Darkman*** for Marvel last summer, will adapt the ***Samurai Cat*** novel. Mark E. Rogers, ***Samurai Cat***'s creator, will paint the cover for the first issue of the comic book.

Samurai Cat #1, a 32-page deluxe full-color comic book, will be priced at $2.25. Look for it in comic shops on April 18, 1991.

by LANNY LATHEM

Caliber Readies Several Tomes For New Imprint

Caliber Press has risen to the upper echelon of black and white comics publishers with such titles as ***Crow, Baker Street, Caliber Presents, Fringe,*** and ***Airwaves;*** most of those books are aimed at mature readers, however, which means that a large number of younger comics fans aren't able to enjoy many of the books that Caliber puts out. When Gary Reed, Caliber's publisher, finalized his plans for a number of all-ages series, he saw that as a potential problem--but he also saw a solution. Rather than publishing the books under the Caliber imprint, these new projects will launch a new line, Tome Press, which will be devoted to titles with historical and biographical themes as well as to literary adaptations.

"Although most of the Caliber line is for mature readers," Reed said, "most of the material isn't really what would be considered the hard adult material which seems to be proliferating on the market right now. However, we carry the mature labels to mainly serve as a responsible guide to retailers. We hope that each one of our books is evaluated individually....The Tome Press line will, with possibly a few exceptions that will be clearly designated, be for all ages. We want this to be something that could possibly be used in schools or libraries." The school and library markets are more than casual references; Reed confirmed that several of the books that will be published by Tome Press were actually designed for various school boards with whom Caliber has been in communication.

Nosferatu

The Tome Press line is tentatively slated for a May launch. The first titles from Tome include ***Nosferatu, Renfield,*** and ***Song of the Cid*** (all of which had been mentioned last year as Caliber titles). Initial plans call for all three of these series to be published in full color; Tome will print both color and black and white comics,, with the format decision determined by the artwork for each series.

Nosferatu is written by Rafael Nieves and fully painted by Ken Holewczynski. The series is inspired by F.W. Murnau's ***Nosferatu,*** which has become one of the most highly praised German expressionistic films of all time.

Renfield is a retelling of Bram Stoker's Dracula with a significant twist: the tale is presented through the eyes of Renfield, one who succumbed to Dracula's powers. Kyle Garrett is writing the series, which is fully painted by Vince Locke.

Renfield

Song of the Cid, written by Brent Truax and painted by Waine Reid, is the story of Spain's national hero, El Cid. This biographical series tells how El Cid rose from exile to lead Spain in its battle with the invading Moors.

Future series include ***Suppressed History***, in which Starlen Baxter and others will explore aspects of history that are often overlooked in the texts; ***Jason and the Argonauts,*** Patrick Zirchner's retelling of the classic myth; ***Zulu Nation,*** a chronicle of the Zulu wars; ***Poems of War,*** featuring illustrations by a variety of artists to accompany old and new poems dealing with war through the ages; ***The Last Viking,*** spotlighting Amundsen's journeys to the South Pole; and other self-explanatory series such as ***The Titanic*** and ***The Alamo.***

While Tome will adapt some works, their adaptations will not be designed to compete with the ***Classics Illustrated*** line; before Tome schedules a series, they check to be sure a ***Classics*** version isn't already in the works. "There is so much potential material out there, I don't see any reason to try and compete with First," Reed said. He stressed that Tome will focus on historical and biographical material and that when the company does deal with a classic novel (like ***Dracula)*** they'll try to give it a slightly different twist to differentiate it from the ***Classics Illustrated*** approach. "We think that there is a place on the comic shelves for this type of material," Reed said.

by CLIFF BIGGERS

NEWSBRIEFS

OMAC SEES THINGS IN BLACK AND WHITE

The new **John Byrne** ***OMAC*** series, announced last year in the pages of ***CSN***, is definitely on DC's schedule to begin in early May. The four-issue limited series is written and drawn by John Byrne--but for the first time in the history of DC's prestige format, the book will be presented not in painted color but in black and white. This decision was made by Byrne, who is preparing the artwork using the lavish duotone style that he first presented in his artwork in Namor last year. In the new series, OMAC faces quite a challenge: he must recreate the DC Universe as it once was before Mr. Big altered the fabric of time itself! Each 48-page issue of ***OMAC*** is priced at $4.95; the series kicks off on May 11th.

UNDER THE SPELL OF THE BLUES

Eric Shanower has taken readers on four comics sojourns to **L. Frank Baum**'s world of Oz; this April, he offers a fifth graphic novel excursion into the fantasy land that Dorothy has made so famous. ***Blue Witch of Oz***, a 48-page graphic novel in the same format as First's other Oz publications, sends Dorothy and the Scarecrow on a mission to find the enigmatic Blue Witch of Oz. According the the Book of Records, the Blue Witch went off to the Great Gray Gilikin Swamp to find her stolen son. Unfortunately, she was the victim of a magic spell and never returned. The spell is so complex, so obscure that even Glinda can't decipher the incantations on the pages of the Great Book of Records--so it's up to Dorothy and the Scarecrow to unravel the mystery and return the Blue Witch to Oz.

Eric Shanower, the creator of the other Oz graphic novels, is the writer and artist of this series as well. Shanower's work on such comics as DC's ***Justice League*** has been praised; many fans might not have realized that this "hot new fan-fave" has actually been producing these outstanding fantasy works for a number of years--and will continue to produce them on a steady basis. ***Blue Witch of Oz*** is scheduled for April 18th release; the full-color graphic novel s priced at $8.95.

Blue Witch of Oz™ &©1991 Eric Shanower

NEW WARRIORS GO FOR THE GOLD

The New Warriors get hotter and hotter as each month goes by; unfortunately for those who have just recently discovered this super-team, though, the first issue of the book is climbing rapidly in price and is actually quite hard to find. Marvel is trying to make it a bit easier for new readers to get in on the ground floor with the ***New Warriors:*** they're going to offer a ***New Warriors #1 Gold Edition*** in May that will reprint the **Fabian Nicieza-Mark Bagley-Al Williamson** first issue with a new metallic-gold cover. ***The New Warriors Gold Edition #1*** should reach comic shops on May 30th--the same day that ***New Warriors #13*** and ***New Warriors Annual #1*** hit the stands!

Dan Turner™ &©1991 Robert Leslie Bellem

TURNER TURNS UP IN NEW MINISERIES

Dan Turner, the 1930's pulp detective who has already appeared in a made for television film, will start in five all-new adventures in the upcoming Eternity limited series ***Dan Turner: The Dark Star of Death.*** Based on the character created by **Robert Leslie Bellem**, ***Dan Turner: Dark Star of Death #1*** is set in Hollywood of the 1930's, where Turner tracks down a missing studio exec, only to be framed for his murder. The first issue also reprints a Dan Turner short story, "Corpse From the Sky," by Bellem and Barreaux. **John Wooley, Kevin Tuma,** and **Gary Dumm** are the creative team for ***Dan Turner: Dark Star of Death #1,*** which is scheduled for March release. (Incidentally, the first Dan Turner film did well enough that it's now available on video, and the character will return in at least four more made-for-tv movies over the next three years.)

LUCY AND THREE STOOGES GET "IN-DEPTH" TREATMENT

Eternity's ***I Love Lucy*** and ***Three Stooges*** comics have been hits in both black and white and color, so why not move into another comics medium: 3-D? ***I Love Lucy in 3-D #1*** and ***Three Stooges in 3-D #1*** each feature 32 pages of story and art with no ads, and both include material never before featured in 3-D. **Jim Korkis** writes the introduction for each book. Both are set for March release; each will be priced at $3.95, and will include 3-D glasses.

THINK OF IT AS A "WHO'S WHO" FOR WEAPONS...

Punisher Armory #1 was a surprise sellout last summer, so it should be no surprise to anyone that Marvel has decided to do it again. ***Punisher Armory #2***, slated for April 11th release, is another 32-page deluxe-format comic featuring thirty pages of Punisher armament along with info about how it works and what damage it can do. You should have no trouble locating it on the stands--it's the book with the eye-catching **Jim Lee** cover. Find out what sort of hardware a state-of-the-art crime-smasher carries into action--think of it as a crash course in munitions recognition for only $1.75!

FLAMING CARROT HOSTS SOME HOT GUEST STARS

The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles will be appearing in a two-part crossover story in ***Flaming Carrot*** #25 and #26; the first of the two issues is scheduled for release at just about the same time that the second film hits theaters. ***Flaming Carrot*** creator **Bob Burden** will return the favor by allowing his Mysterymen to guest-star in a Mirage Press series featuring the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (to be illustrated by **Jim Lawson**).

"This has been a monster of a project," Burden said. "I've been juggling two stories and actually drawing one of them. The chance to reach many new readers and expose them to my characters for the first time has had me putting in a lot of special effort and extra care...Everything has been top secret until now, and issue #25 of ***Flaming Carrot*** has been late for a while. I hope my readers understand the delay now." Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles co-creator **Kevin Eastman** is also very enthusiastic about the projects. "We've been talking about this for a long time," he said, "and a crossover between Flaming Carrot and the Turtles was something that just had to happen. Flaming Carrot and the Turtles are very compatible in a crossover situation. Both are outrageous character concepts brought into a more real world." Each issue of ***Flaming Carrot*** is priced at $2.00; no price has been announced for the Mirage Turtles/Mysterymen crossover.

DARK CITY...
HEY KIDS! LOOK AT THIS GREAT, STRANGE, SPOOKY, LITTLE GREEN CHARACTER I FOUND IN NEW YORK CITY! HE'LL SURE SCARE THE HECK OUT OF VILLAINS EVERYWHERE...
JUST AS SOON AS I TURN HIM INTO A REAL, HOT-SHOT, CRIME FIGHTIN' MYSTERYMAN!
ART & STORY BOB BURDEN
ASSISTED BY: ROXANNE STARR JOE PRUETT & DAVE NEWTON

Flaming Carrot™ &©1991 Bob Burden. TMNT™ &©1991 Mirage Studios

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NEWSBRIEFS

LEE POSTER BOOK A REAL JIM DANDY

Marvel's first poster book, featuring the artwork of **Todd McFarlane,** was a magazine-sized foldout booklet--but their second poster book, highlighting hot artist **Jim Lee,** is a larger, much more durable project. ***The Jim Lee Poster Book*** features eight of Jim Lee's favorite pieces, including the covers to ***X-Men*** #s 258, 268, and 274, ***Punisher War Journal*** #s 11, 15, and 17, the splash page to ***X-Men*** #268 (featuring Captain America), and the last page of ***X-Men*** #269 (Featuring Magneto). Each illustration features all-new airbrushed color and is reproduced in almost the same size as the original Jim Lee artwork, giving fans an opportunity to peruse the art in much greater detail than they'd ever see on the comic book page. The book is printed on coated stock with a stiff cover and a cardboard insert to prevent damage. ***The Jim Lee Posterbook*** features more than a lot of portfolios, at a much lower price--only $9.95. Marvel added the poster book to their schedule at the last minute, and they're rushing it into shops on March 14th, so be sure to talk to the people at your local comic shop and reserve a copy while you still can!--and tell 'em that ***CSN*** sent you, okay?...

BACK TO THE FUTURE

DC's major crossover storyline, *Armageddon 2001*, gets underway in earnest in April with the release of two annuals that tie in with the multi-hero storyline. Both ***Superman Annual #3*** and ***Batman Annual #15*** offer readers an intriguing glimpse into possible futures for two of DC's most popular heroes.

Superman Annual #15 (by **Dan Jurgens** and newcomer artist **Dusty Abell**) has Waverider seeking help from Superman in tracking down the hero who will become the arch-villain of the year 2030. Waverider also gives Superman a look into one of the Man of Steel's possible futures--a future in which Batman is forced to use Luthor's kryptonite ring to battle an out-of-control Superman! Even worse Metropolis is nuked! Making matters even more confusing, in this future, Superman has married Lana Lang, not Lois Lane. The confrontation between Superman and Batman might bring back a few memories of the unforgettable battle at the climax of ***Dark Knight... Superman Annual #3*** is scheduled for April 11th release.

A week later, ***Batman Annual #15*** (by **Alan Grant** and **Jim Fern**) gives readers a glimpse into Batman's possible future. It's the year 2001, the first year of the 21st Century. The Joker is a talk-show host, while Batman has been sentenced to death for the murder of the Penguin! Only Senator Tim Drake can save the Batman from execution--but in order to do so, he must once again don the Robin costume... This annual also guest-stars Catwoman and Anarky. Look for this $2 annual on April 18th.

IT'S IN THE CARDS-- OR RATHER, THEY'RE IN THE BOOKS...

Okay, okay--we know that Dark Horse's trading cards, already announced twice in 1990, never managed to appear in any of their books last year. So does Dark Horse. But if you've paid attention at the comic shop racks, you've noticed that the first books with the Dark Horse trading cards in them have started to appear. According to marketing director **Bob Schreck**, "Even after we had experienced multiple unforeseeable technical and licensing complications, we continued to meet with logistical and physical problems in the pre-press stages of production. We sincerely regret this delay, but we are happy that the wrinkles are ironed out, and are eagerly awaiting fan reaction to what we consider to be extremely hot collectibles that were well worth waiting for.

So how do you go about getting a set of all twenty-four cards? Well, there's only one way to do it: buy the Dark Horse comics that they appear in! The first three books to look for are ***Outlanders 25, Roachmill 10,*** and ***Dark HOrse Presents 48;*** after that, you're on your own! Dark Horse won't be able to offer the cards for sale separately ever due to contractual obligations, so you can be sure that they're going to be quite rare indeed. And Bob Schreck leaves us with one intriguing tidbit: "Fans should be on the lookout for a limited print-run error card!"

ELFIN WARDROBE ADDITIONS

Graphitti has already released four different ***Elfquest*** t-shirts--but Elfquest fans want more! And they can have more--because Graphitti is readying a fifth ***Elfquest t-shirt*** for late April release. The shirt will feature a new illustration by **Wendy Pini** on a white heavyweight 100% cotton t-shirt. At the same time, they're also re-offering the first four t-shirts and the limited edition ***Elfquest 10th Anniversary Cloisonne Pin*** produced in 1988. The shirts are priced at $12.95 each, while the pin carries a $5.95 price-tag. As with specialty items of this sort, you might want to reserve them with the friendly folks at your local comic shop--and mention ***CSN*** when you do, okay?...

EVERYONE'S FAVORITE TEENAGER TURNS FIFTY

Archie's a surprisingly spry-looking fifty-year-old, isn't he? Even Dick Clark would love to look so youthful. Well, Archie isn't about to reveal his secrets--but he is willing to let everyone take part in his fiftieth birthday celebration. ***Artists' Salute to Archie Andrews Fiftieth Birthday Celebration*** will feature the work of over thirty popular cartoonists, including **Bud Blake, Sergio Aragones, Sid Jacobson, Al Jaffe, Ted Key, Brant Parker,** and **Joe Kubert**. Each artist will render Archie in his own style, without the aid of style sheets of existing artwork. The high-quality magazine-sized publication will be priced at $7.95--and according to **Dale Kanzler** of Archie, "The proceeds from this historic project will be donated to the Milt Gross Fund, the charity arm of the National Cartoonist Society." So you can get a collector's item and help a good cause at the same time!

THE INVADERS RETURN

The Invaders are coming back--but we're not referring to the World War II superhero group here, nor are we alluding to the Roy Thinnes television series. No, we're talking about ***Invaders From Mars,*** the Eternity Comics adaptation of the **William Cameron Menzies** sf film that was published last year as a miniseries. The book by **Steve Jones** and **Sandy Carruthers** tells the story of a young boy who sees a UFO landing but is unable to convince anyone that he's not imagining things. Inexorably, the townspeople begin to disappear, only to be replaced by strange doppelgangers. The only person who'll believe the boy is the school nurse--and it is up to them to save Earth while they still can.

The ***Invaders From Mars Graphic Album*** will feature the entire three-issue limited series with a photo cover and publicity photos of the original cast. The graphic album is priced at $9.95.

Eternity plans to follow the adaptation with a sequel, subtitled ***Invaders From Mars Book Two: Invaders From Earth,*** beginning this summer. As soon as Eternity announces the creative team for the new series, ***CSN*** will pass the word along!

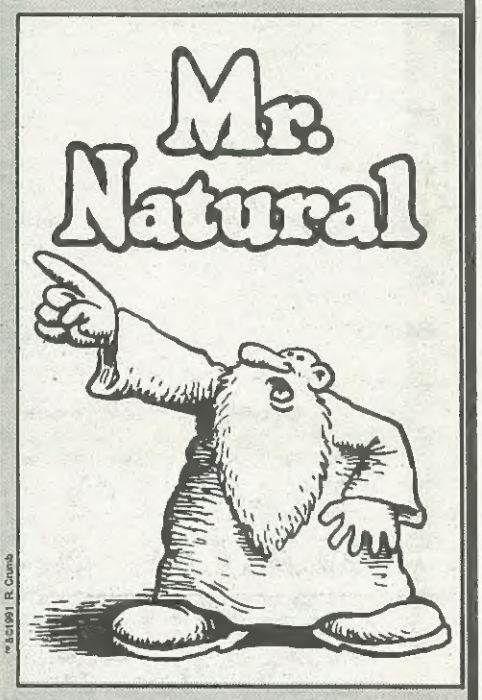
SUICIDE SQUAD OPENS FIRE ON THE DRAGON'S HORDE

The Suicide Squad have faced some pretty formidable adversaries in their career--but are they ready for the Red Shadows, the Khmer Rouge, renegade troops from the Soviet Army, and the Japanese Yakuza, all at the same time? They'd better be, because that's just who they're facing in the four-part "Dragon's Horde" storyline that begins in ***Suicide Squad #53.*** **Ostrander, Yale,** and **Isherwood** put the Suicide Squad on the trail of The Dragon's Horde, a cache of Soviet weapons hidden in Cambodia and earmarked for delivery to the Japanese mafia. The Japanese government is counting on the Suicide Squad to uncover the conspiracy and block the shipment of the armament. Katana of the Outsiders and Mark Shaw, Manhunter, guest star in this miniseries-within-a-series. Look for the first installment to reach comic shops on April 4th.

VENGEANCE DOESN'T WEAKEN WITH TIME

Jim Valentino's ***Guardians of the Galaxy*** has given readers some intriguing glimpses of the descendants of Marvel's superheroes of today, but ***Guardians of the Galaxy #13*** guest-stars a hero that seems a little...well, *unexpected*. The Ghost Rider of the 31st Century attacks the Guardians in this issue; he mistakes them for enforcers of the Church of Universal Truth.

This one may be a must-have for curiosity's sake--although judging from reader reaction to ***Guardians of the Galaxy*** so far, a lot of you regard each and every issue as a must-have! Look For ***Guardians of the Galaxy #13*** on April 18th.



CRUMBS IN A BOX

Robert Crumb's artwork has appeared in dozens of comics, several magazines, and numerous trade paperbacks and hardcovers--and now Kitchen Sink is offering some three dozen of his best-known creations in a box--a boxed trading card set, that is. (This won't be the first time Crumb has appeared in a box, incidentally; he did a boxed trading card set of blues musicians a while back that can claim that distinction.)

The ***R. Crumb Trading Card Set*** will feature 36 full color cards, each featuring a different Crumb character--including himself. The set is recommended for mature fans, but Kitchen Sink points out that explicit sex will not be depicted on any of the cards.

Dave Schreiner is writing the info that will appear on the back of the cards, which will be available in April for $9.95.

CSN PREVIEWS

CSN CHARTS

TOP 50 COMICS

CSN's Top Seller charts are based on figures supplied by the two major distributors, Diamond Distribution and Capital City Distribution, as well as figures by a cross-section of comics speciality shops. The distributor's figures represent retailer orders placed on the titles, while the information from stores represents copies sold.

1. Spider-Man 8
2. Action 662
3. X-Men 274
4. Superman 53
5. Robin 3
6. Marvel Comics Presents 72
7. Amazing Spider-Man 345
8. Legends of the Dark Knight 15
9. New Mutants 99
10. Detective Comics 627
11. Ghost Rider 11
12. X-Factor 63
13. Wolverine 37
14. Fantastic Four 350
15. New Warriors 9
16. Incredible Hulk 379
17. Darkhawk 1
18. Batman 460
19. Punisher 46
20. Excalibur 35
21. Captain America 380
22. Web of Spider-Man 74
23. Punisher War Journal 27
24. Spectacular Spider-Man 174
25. Iron Man 377
26. Namor the Sub-Mariner 12
27. Marvel Comics Presents 71
28. Silver Surfer 47
29. Justice League Quarterly 2
30. Justice League America 48
31. Thor 430
32. What If? 23
33. Avengers 330
34. Justice League Europe 23
35. Daredevil 290
36. Green Lantern 10
37. The 'Nam 53
38. Guardians of the Galaxy 10
39. Adventures of Superman 476
40. Avengers West Coast 68
41. Moon Knight 24
42. New Titans 74
43. Alpha Flight 94
44. Flash 48
45. Doctor Strange 27
46. Books of Magic 2
47. SHIELD 21
48. Star Trek 17
49. Legion of Superheroes 16
50. Challengers of the Unknown 1

TOP DOLLAR COMICS

The following comics, graphic novels and trade paperbacks were given Top Dollar ratings based on the dollar volume of the copies sold (or are expected to sell) during the late January and February sales period.

1. Spider-Man 8
2. Detective Comics 627
3. Action 662
4. X-Men 274
5. Legends of the Dark Knight 15
6. Marvel Comics Presents 72
7. Ghost Rider 11
8. Superman 53
9. Robin 3
10. Wolverine 37
11. Fantastic Four 350
12. Books of Magic 2
13. Amazing Spider-Man 345
14. Captain America 380
15. New Mutants 99
16. Excalibur 35
17. Justice League Quarterly 2
18. Alien Legion: On the Edge 2
19. X-Factor 63
20. New Warriors 9
21. Cholly & Flytrap 2
22. Punisher War Journal 27
23. Incredible Hulk 379
24. Darkhawk 1
25. The Nazz 3
26. Batman 460
27. Marvel Comics Presents 71
28. Punisher 46
29. Web of Spider-Man 74
30. What If? 23
31. Spectacular Spider-Man 174
32. New Titans 74
33. Iron Man 377
34. Namor the Sub-Mariner 12
35. Metropol 1
36. The Nam 53
37. Appleseed Book Four #1
38. Silver surfer 47
39. Moon Knight 24
40. Justice League America 48
41. Alpha Flight 94
42. Vampire Lestat 8
43. Thor 430
44. Mummy 2
45. Avengers 330
46. Daredevil 290
47. Doctor Strange 27
48. World Without End 3
49. Star Trek 17
50. Legion of Superheroes 16

TOP 10 BLACK & WHITE COMICS

1. Elfquest: Kings of the Broken Wheel 4
2. Appleseed Book Four 1
3. Planet of the Apes: Urchak's Folly 1
4. Dark Horse Presents 47
5. Starstruck 3
6. Alien Nation: The Spartans 4
7. Alien Nation: A Breed Apart 3
8. Ironwood 1
9. Baker Street 7
10. Cerebus 142

Cerebus ™ &©1991 Dave Sim

TOP TEN NON-COMICS

The Top Ten Non-Comics is based on number and not dollar value. This category includes graphic novels, hardcovers, trade paperbacks, portfolios, etc. It includes books that actually were on sale during the January sales period.

1. Greatest Flash Stories Ever Told HC
2. Marvel 1990 Year In Review
3. Marvel Swimsuit Special
4. Batman: The Dailies Volume 3
5. Marvel Handbook Master Edition 3
6. Who's Who 7
8. Elektra: Assassin HC
9. Marvel Trading Cards
10. Elektra Lives Again HC

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Give & Take
by Cliff Biggers & Brett Brooks

Each month, Cliff Biggers (in plain type) and *Brett Brooks (in italicized type)* take a look at a few comics due out in the next few weeks. Publishers interested in having their books reviewed in these pages should send copies to ***CSN Reviews,*** 2339 Milstead Circle, Marietta GA 30066; we'd prefer receiving xeroxes of books at least thirty days before they're supposed to reach comic shops . Now that the business end of this is finished, let's get on with the reviews...

I grew up on early 1960's ***Justice League of America*** stories. I was enthralled by the first three years' worth of JLA adventures, and even as young as I was, I soon recognized a familiar pattern: the group would uncover a problem, they would divide into smaller groups to deal with some aspect of the problem, then the team would be reunited for the climactic final scenes. The fun was in the groupings; once the heroes separated into smaller groups, the stories seemed to open up, to allow each hero to use his or her powers to greater effect than in the crowded opening and closing segments.

I didn't realize until years later that the pattern wasn't original with the ***Justice League of America***--that it had in fact begun decades earlier with the Justice Society of America. By the time I discovered its roots, it no longer mattered: I'll always associate this story structure with the JLA, and I'll always have nostalgic feelings for the format--feelings colored by the excitement a seven-year-old feels when reading a comic book is still a new thrill.

With that in mind, I can safely say that ***Justice Society of America*** is almost a classic Justice League adventure.

Writer Len Strazewski is following the traditional format, with a significant twist: he begins his eight-issue limited series with four issues' worth of solo adventures starring The Flash, Black Canary, Green Lantern, and Hawkman, following that up with a pair of team adventures (Flash and Hawkman, followed by Green Lantern and Black Canary) and a pair of issues featuring the entire JSA.

Close enough. I'm hooked.

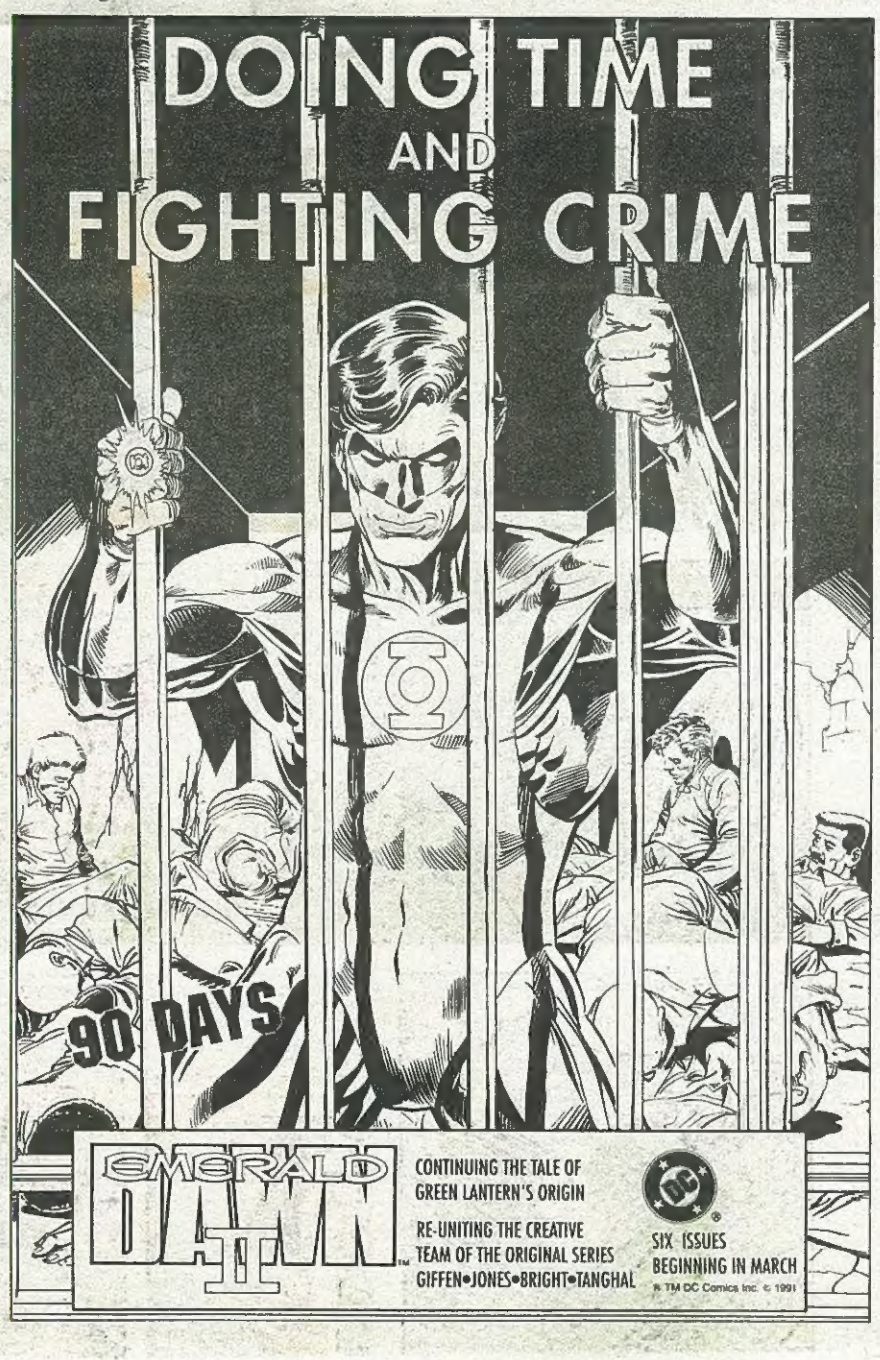
Of course, it would have been possible for DC to miss with a ***Justice Society*** adventure; after all, some of the Golden-Age hero series they've done in the past have been pretty...shall we say forgettable? But that's not the case here. Strazewski writes an original story in a structured, carefully linked style that is sure to appeal to fans of the classic JSA and JLA adventures of years past--but he never gets bogged down in a fascination for the past that has unfortunately plagued so many Golden-Age-revival series.

I have never really read any Justice Society stories. Oh, maybe a couple of reprints here and there, and certainly some of the more modern retellings and attempted revivals of the team, but never any of the original stories. So it seems odd that I am reviewing a new mini-series based on one of the all time classics of comics. I have, however read a great many of the ***Justice League*** *stories, and using the standards that you have set for this review I can do nothing but agree. Len Strazewski has produced a fun story in the "old"* ***Justice League*** *style, but in a manner that I feel will appeal to many of today's modern fans.*

The villain in the ***Justice Society*** limited series is Vandal Savage, who seems well on his way to achieving arch-villain status at DC--which is well-deserved, considering the character's richly nefarious history. The story is set in 1950, five years after the end of the war (and near the end of the Justice Society's run in ***All-Star Comics***, ironically). The world is in transition, and so is the Justice Society--and Strazewski uses that feeling of an age in transition to perfect effect in this period piece. Think of it as a cosmic adventure, 1950's style, with a 1990's perspective.

The artwork is Rick Burchett's best work yet; his work moves across the page with a vitality reminiscent at times of Alex Toth, at times of Howard Chaykin, at times of Gil Kane--but never imitative of the styles of these three talents. Instead, the end result is solidly Burchett, but somehow more heroic than his recent work on other books. I'm particularly fond of his rendition of the Flash; this is a runner's physique, not a stereotyped modern-superhero's body.

The art by Burchett is very nice. I too was quite taken by his rendition of the Flash. There is something natural about the way that Burchett has



& REVIEWS

drawn him that is very believable. The only other artist that I see strongly in Burchett's work that you overlooked is C.C. Beck. Many of Burchett's figures have that distinctive Beck look to them--simple but powerful.

Burchett will be joined in future issues by other talented artists such as Mike Parobeck, Grant Miehm, and Tom Artis--all illustrators whose work has been strongly recommended in earlier review columns in ***CSN.*** I'm eager to see their versions of these heroes, partly because of enthusiastic curiosity and partly because I'm convinced that from this quartet of artist will come at least one major fan-favorite talent of the 1990's.

I am looking forward to seeing some of the other artist's work on these characters in the future issues; all of them are talented artists who deserve praise in their own right. I think that there is a good chance that you're right about the future of these guys too--there's a fan-fave in there somewhere. I am also looking forward to seeing just what the beck is going to happen in this book, and particularly to the golden-age Starman? I don't think that it's any coincidence that the writer of the modern Starman has chosen that characters predecessor as one of the main cruxes of this story.

Anyone who ever enjoyed the ***Justice Society*** or the original ***Justice League*** will *have* to have the ***Justice Society of America*** miniseries. Now, if DC would only use this as a stepping stone to an entire series of Golden and Silver Age flashback miniseries...

The last time we reviewed ***Miracleman,*** *we talked about how the book was growing into something larger than it initially seemed. That is even more true now than I had previously thought.*

Miracleman #20 *is entitled Winter's Tale, and it's...well, chilling. The story revolves around a couple with two children, a boy and a girl. The boy's name is Glen and he is a normal happy six year old. The girl's name is Mist, and she's a child of Miracleman's. The story takes place the day before Wintersday--the day that all children get their wish and run the world--and to start it off, Glen and Mist want to hear a special story before they go to sleep, Winter's Tale.*

This story's format was extremely successful; Gaiman used a standard comic book framing sequence with a fairy tale storybook as the heart. The slight variances in art style between the two sections of the issue helped bring it all together. Mark Buckingham is continually impressing me with his artistic ability; he seems able to vary his own style to express the necessary mood without having to ever truly deviate from all of his other work. But, as good as this art is, it's the story that is making ***Miracleman*** *better and better with every passing issue.*

Buckingham is a bit of an enigma artistically: he has done every issue in sucha different style that I'm not sure which is his own. I'll have to confess that ***Miracleman #20*** was the issue that I found most visually appealing of any that he's done, though, so I'm certainly quite pleased with it.

Neil Gaiman has pushed this title in ways that Alan Moore never did; creating what I would consider one of the most intricate stories in the history of comics. Miracleman: The Golden Age is relying on the reader to think about what is happening, nothing is being told too clear-cut. Gaiman is opting to explore the world of Miracleman and by doing this to show us what has happened to Miracleman and his supporting cast--this is perhaps the

Time to Vote!

Did we goof or not? Truth be told, when we decided to add the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* comic strip to *CSN* we didn't realize that the Sunday strip wasn't comics, but puzzles, games and fan art. While reaction to the strips has been very positive, some readers haven't been too impressed with the Sunday pages.

So, should the Sunday *Turtles* fun page stay or go? We're going to let *you* decide! We aren't talking about dropping the daily *Turtles* strips, they will continue. And if they ever start doing comics instead of puzzles we'll add the Sunday strip again. So, with that in mind. Yay not Nay, Send your votes to

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CREATED BY BOB KANE
BATMAN
BY LOEBS, CINFA & NYBERG
THE RIDDLER TOYS WITH HIS NEWLY STOLEN CASE...
C'MON... OPEN F'R DADDY...!
WHILE AN INJURED BATMAN ANSWERS THE SUDDEN GLARE OF THE BAT-SIGNAL.
LATE AT NIGHT, THERE IS A MEETING WITH TWO TOP ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS...
I WON'T WORK BLIND AND I DON'T WORK FOR FOOLS. WHAT IS IN THIS STOLEN CASE?
WE CAN'T...
WE'VE NO CHOICE.
THREE MILLION DOLLARS IN UNMARKED BILLS AND A SMALL BOX...
THE BOX IS SHAPED ABOUT LIKE THIS... IT CONTAINS THREE VIALS OF... EXTREMELY SENSITIVE MATERIAL.
NOT GOOD ENOUGH.
CHEMICAL WARFARE AGENTS...
THEY WERE SAMPLES... BEING SENT TO... A FRIENDLY GOVERNMENT IN THE NEAR EAST. PURELY FOR DEFENSE...!
I SEE.
I WARNED THEM NOT TO TRADE IN THESE POISONS! IF ONE OF THOSE VIALS IS BREACHED IN THE OPEN AIR... THOUSANDS COULD DIE!
BUT MAYBE THE THIEF COULDN'T GET THE CASE OPEN!
I DOUBT IT. GIVEN UNLIMITED TIME, EVEN AN IDIOT CAN BREACH MOST LOCKS...
I'M RICH! I'M RICH!!!
LOEBS, CINFA & NYBERG
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CSN PREVIEWS

single most detailed description of a character I have ever read.

The oddest thing is that Gaiman has *yet* to write a Miracleman tale as such. We've focused on various members of the Miracleman cast, but we haven't really seen any development with Miracleman himself. I'm quite curious to see what Gaiman does with the focal character of this series.

Winter's Tale is the most frightening tale Gaiman has done to date; it's the story of a child who can do practically anything that she so desires, but is still a child, and what's more, there are more and more children like her being born everyday. The fairy tale that Gaiman creates is something akin to Dr. Seuss written by Edgar Allan Poe. THe child goes trough all of the motions of normal childlike behavior, but underneath all of it is the fact that Winter isn't a child. Winter was born with a complete knowledge of all the things that her parents could teach her, and she still wants more. Winter is a child who can do whatever she imagines, and has the imagination of a child. Yet, Winter is just a child, and as such, has all of a child's blindness. Mist is a child like Winter, she has the abilities of a God, but the weaknesses of a child, but it is her mother who must confront those weaknesses.

The heart of horror lives at home; it is the story of Mist's mother, Rachel, that captures the fear of this tale. Gaiman's portrayal of a mother and wife in total solitude, despite the fact that she is surrounded by people, is amazing. Rachel has to cater to two different children, and yet make them both feel equal. Yet, the tragedy of the situation is always below the surface, and finally comes to light at the end of the story.

It is the sheer lack of feeling that Mist reveals--her lack of compassion in giving her mother devastating news--that is the most disturbing of all. This is a being who looks like a child (by choice), acts like an adult, but has virtually no human compassion whatsoever. I certainly hope this is foreshadowing some of the aspects of The Golden Age that Gaiman intends to explore in the future.

I don't feel that I would be unwarranted in calling Gaiman one of the best writers working in the field today. His work on Miracleman and his work on DC's ***Sandman*** *have surly guaranteed Gaiman a spot in the annals of comic book history. Gaiman's ability to run his reader through a gambit of emotions without ever losing them is a strength that many of today's writers lack. I am eagerly awaiting the next installment of Gaiman's Golden Age.*

SUDDENLY--
SORRY, MORRIE
OL' PAL, BUT THERE'S A LIFEGUARD ON DUTY!
THOUGHT I'D TAIL 'EM TO THEIR HIDEOUT, FIND SOME WAY TO TAKE 'EM ON ONE BY ONE THERE. BUT I COULDN'T LET HIM KILL THE GUARDS.
SPIDER-MAN?! HOW'D HE KNOW ABOUT THIS?! WE HAVEN'T EVEN BEEN HERE TWO MINUTES!
WHUK!
Deadly Foes Of Spider-Man
LEAVE ME ALONE THROB! I WANT THE CHILE!
AND MICHAEL WANTS A DAMN CORNDOG!
Oblivion City

I've been on a hardboiled detective novel kick recently; as a result, I was in the perfect frame of mind for ***Alien Nation: The Skin Trade***. The comic is done in a pastiche of the Raymond Chandler-Mickey Spillane style that almost always adapts well to comics. In this case, though, the detective is a Tenctonese burdened with the name of Mason

BATMAN™

by Loebs, Infantino & Nyberg

BATMAN... WAIT!
I TOLD YOU ...I WON'T WORK BLIND.
WHAT'S IN THE CASE?
THREE MILLION DOLLARS ...AND A SMALL BOX.
IT CONTAINS ...SENSITIVE MATERIALS...
NOT GOOD ENOUGH.
LOEBS, CINFA & NYBERG

THE BOX CONTAINS... SAMPLES OF A DEADLY POISON... MEANT FOR A FRIENDLY GOVERNMENT IN THE NEAR EAST.
I WARNED THEM! IF THOSE VIALS ARE BREACHED... THOUSANDS WILL DIE!
AND YOU WANT ME TO DO... WHAT?
FIND THE MONEY AND THE VIALS... BEFORE SOMETHING TERRIBLE HAPPENS!
OBVIOUSLY THERE WILL BE A FINDER'S FEE...
H-HE'S GONE!
LOEBS, CINFA & NYBERG

I'M RICH! RICH! RICH!
AND THE RIDDLE IS, WHAT AM I GOING TO DO WITH ALL THIS WEALTH?
WHY, I'LL MAKE MYSELF FAMOUS! FEARED! THE GREATEST COSTUMED CRIMINAL OF ALL TIME!
LOEBS, CINFA & NYBERG

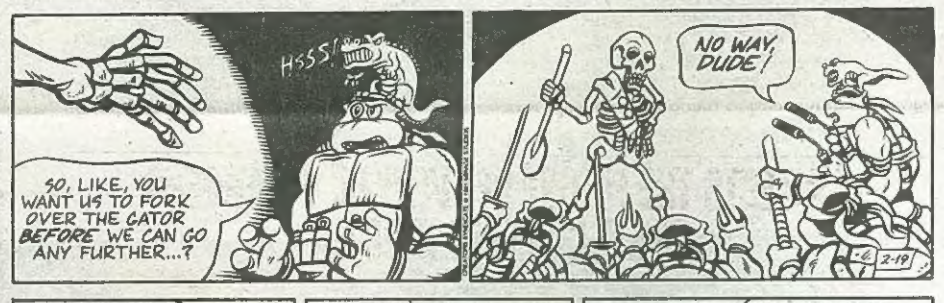
ANY WORD ON THE STOLEN MONEY, BRUCE?
NOT DIRECTLY. SOMEONE IS SPENDING AN AWFUL LOT OF MONEY, THOUGH.
IT LOOKS AS THOUGH HE'S TRYING TO BUY HIMSELF A GANG.
I'VE BEEN A BANK ROBBER F'R TEN YEARS... NOBODY'S EVER OFFERED HEALTH INSURANCE BEFORE!
AND DENTAL. I'M A FAIR GUY!
LOEBS, CINFA & NYBERG

I'VE GOT TO GET BACK ON THE STREET! I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO...!
UHHHHHHHHH
OH, BOY! HE'S NOT EVEN CLOSE TO BEING READY YET!
LOEBS, CINFA & NYBERG

YOUR WOUND IS NOT YET HEALED, MASTER BRUCE.
I'VE GOT TO GET IN SHAPE, ALFRED.
GO!
VERY GOOD, SIR. HOW COULD I EVER HAVE DOUBTED YOU?
LOEBS, CINFA & NYBERG

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES™

AW, MAN, IT WON'T LET US PASS UNTIL WE'VE HANDED OVER THE GATOR ...
BUT WHY?
MAYBE THAT'S THE PRICE WE HAVE TO PAY...
YOU MEAN THE LITTLE GATOR IS, LIKE... FERRY FARE?!
2-18



NO WAY WE'RE GIVING YA THE GATOR, DUDE!
HEY, HE'S PRETTY FAST!
WHAT DO YOU EXPECT--THERE'S NOT AN OUNCE OF FAT ON THIS THING!
BUT ON THE OTHER HAND THERE ISN'T ANY MUSCLE EITHER...!
2-20

GREEN TIP™

CLOSE THE REFRIGERATOR DOOR

WHEN YOU LEAVE THE REFRIGERATOR DOOR OPEN FOR JUST A FEW SECONDS, YOU WASTE A LOT OF ***ENERGY***. DECIDE WHAT YOU WANT ***BEFORE*** OPENING THE DOOR...THEN GET IT AND CLOSE THE DOOR RIGHT AWAY.

2-23

& REVIEWS

Jar (and he's painfully aware of the ridiculousness of his name, I'm glad to see: I was beginning to get tired of silly Newcomer names that seemed to exist for no other reason than to amuse the writers).

Alien Nation: The Skin Trade may have more appeal for ***Alien Nation*** fans than either of the prior limited series, because it takes the familiar ***Alien Nation*** concept in a refreshingly different direction. In this case, the story is almost entirely a Tenctonese adventure: Newcomers are disappearing as part of a plot to give Tenctonese a human appearance. A former overseer named Dexter Methorphan is behind the scheme, and Mason Jar suspects it may be part of a plot to put him back in control of the Newcomers.

Lowell Cunningham begins his story as a rather blatant pastiche of the Chandler style--but before the book is halfway over, he moves into a strong missing-person mystery tale that is filled with touches that'll appeal to ***Alien Nation*** fans.

*I haven't been on a hard-boiled detective kick lately, and I too enjoyed **Alien Nation: The Skin Trade.** There is just something about reading a story that pokes as much fun at itself as this one does--it's fun. I'm surprised that you didn't mention the underlying drug plotline that will obviously come into further light in the near future. There is a drug called Jack that works on both human and newcomer alike, and, strangely enough, one of the main pushers of this new high is also the main baddy of the story. There is going to be some sort of connection between that drug and the remodeling of newcomers in human skin.*

*The science-fiction/mystery connection that this story works on seems very natural for this book; after all, it was the combining of science -fiction and buddy-cop stories that got the whole idea underway to begin with. I think that **Alien Nation: The Skin Trade** is a logical step for this series to take, and will hopefully prove to be a stepping stone for other stories featuring Mason Jar.*

I agree; the character is the most entertaining pat of the book, because he is aware of the unusual situation in which he finds himself.

The book is competently illustrated by newcomer (no pun intended) artist Leonard Kirk and inked by Terry Pallot; I'd be more pleased with Kirk's artwork if he would resist the urge to over-render his backgrounds with such intricate linework that the foreground figures tend to blend in too much. Kirk has a fairly good eye for design, though, so the story moves along quite well.

Alien Nation: Skin Trade is a sure winner for those who enjoyed the television series--but those who found the television series a bit too mundane are likely to enjoy this imaginative blending of mystery and science fiction storylines even more.

Y'know, I was just thinking to myself, "self, that Spider-man character, now there's a character that deserves his own mini-series." And what-do-you-know, those guys at Marvel have decided to put one out!...

*Okay, **Deadly Foes of Spider-Man** isn't exactly a Spider-Man miniseries--but it does have Spider-Man as one of the main characters. **Deadly Foes of Spider-Man** is a new four-issue limited series that takes a slightly different look at how everyone's favorite wall-crawler is viewed--from the villain's perspective. The villains who are featured in this story are: The Rhino, The Speed Demon, Hydro-Man, Boomerang, and The Beetle, who have joined together under the name The Sinister Syndicate. They decided that they were all fairly much washouts as solo-villains, but maybe there is something to that strength in numbers theory.*

The villains might be the only weak part of this story insofar as Spider-Man fans are concerned. This isn't a group of awe-inspiring nemeses, after all. I enjoy the interplay between Rhino and the Beetle, though; it rounds out the characters a bit.

*The writer for the series is Danny Fingeroth, the writer of the new, hot **Darkhawk** series; Kerry Gammill and Al Milgrom supply the art. Of course, every good story has a villain, and since it would be hard for those fine folks at Marvel to "villainize" Spidey, Fingeroth picked up one of Spidey's nastiest foes as the villain for this series--the Kingpin. This book provides an interesting slant on a series, and gives the readers yet another chance to see Spider-Man in action every month.*

Fans who enjoyed the straightforward action of last year's Sinister Six storyline should enjoy The Deadly Foes of Spider-Man as well; this is a very conflict-driven series (which should make many fans very happy).

***Oblivion City** is the new title by writer/artist Andy Garcia. It is published by Slave Labor. It is very odd. It is also very funny. Andy Garcia has that warped sense of humor that you don't often see making it into comics--those people usually become politicians.*

***Oblivion City** is the story of cartoonist Seth Throb, and his city, Oblivion City. Oblivion City isn't like your town, and I'm not sure where you live. Oblivion City is the kind of place that has diners with doorways to Hell so that demons can come up and get a good bowl of chili; the kind of place where the mayor gets murdered every Thursday (and it's starting to tick him off); the kind of place where super-heroes live...well, a superhero anyway--and not a very good one at that. In any case, Oblivion City isn't like your city, but it could be; there is something just under the surface that is telling you that Oblivion City is real and could exist and you live there. I think that it's called satire.*

But the satire in Oblivion City is far less important than the absurdist streak that permeates the book. These characters accept the oddity of their situation with an aplomb that really carries the story. Every now and then, Garcia strikes out with an idea--but it's very rare that he fails to score an on-target hit.

*Andy Garcia has fun with this book. He pokes fun at just about anything he can get his hands on really. His storytelling is never too hard to follow, and always entertaining. Garcia's art is somewhat reminiscent of Scott Saavedra's of **Dr. Radium** fame. So, if you like things that are just slightly off center, or even very off center, give **Oblivion City** a try; it's just what you're looking for.*

Sweet XVI just might be the most innovative young-readers series introduced in the past decade. Barbara Slate isn't doing a licensed product, she isn't producing a comic-book-spoof, she isn't doing funny animals...instead, she's putting a new spin on the archetypal teenage comic by setting the action in Ancient Rome, where princess Cornelia is faced with such difficult dilemmas as who to invite to her Sweet 16th birthday party. Sure, it's reminiscent of Archie--but it manages to embellish the Archie-type with historical references, clever asides, copious music references, and a contemporary hipness that is all too often lacking from most Archie stories. ***Sweet XVI*** is just the sort of book that could hold on to the younger readers who started picking up Marvel's Barbie comics; at the same time, it's clever enough to amuse older readers as well.

***Sweet XVI** may be imitative of Archie, but it does a good job of it, so I don't see that it's a problem. I don't think that most kids will either. This gives kids another book to pick up that is similar to Archie, but with an all-new cast.*

But it's *more* than an Archie imitation! That's what pleases me--and that's what deserves mention. Slate could have just created another teen book with Archie-esque characters in an unimportant setting, but she's chosen instead to imbue this story with a number of little touches that make it stand out from its source inspiration. Archie fans are sure to enjoy ***Sweet XVI***--but those who find Archie somehow antiquated are likely to be pleased with ***Sweet XVI*** as well, because it has a very contemporary feel once you look past the togas and marble columns.

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NOT SINCE INVASION! HAS A CROSSOVER SERIES SO SHAKEN THE DC UNIVERSE!
THIS BLOCKBUSTER SERIES BEGINS IN ARMAGEDDON 2001 #1, CROSSES OVER INTO
TWELVE DC ANNUALS, AND REACHES ITS SHOCKING CLIMAX IN ARMAGEDDON 2001 #2.
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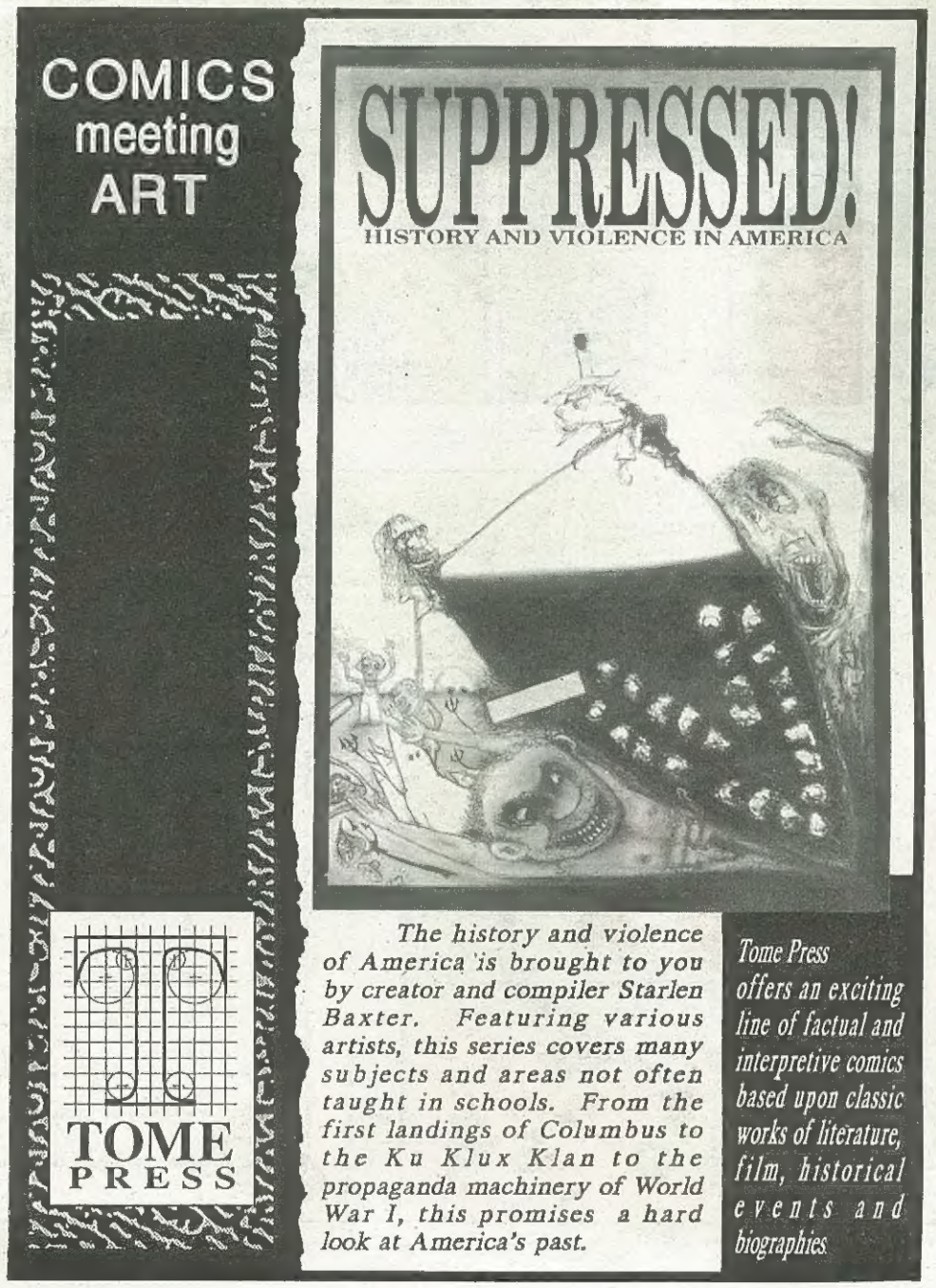
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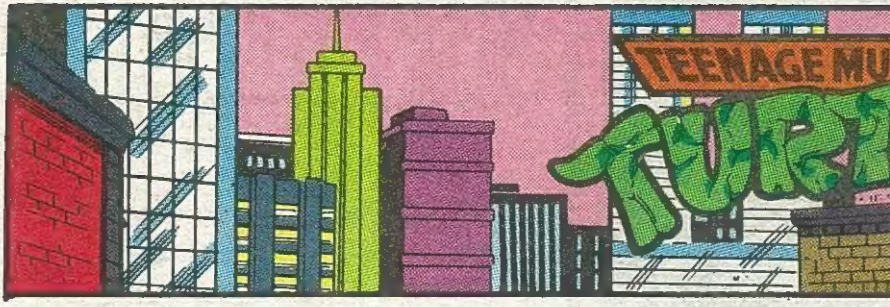
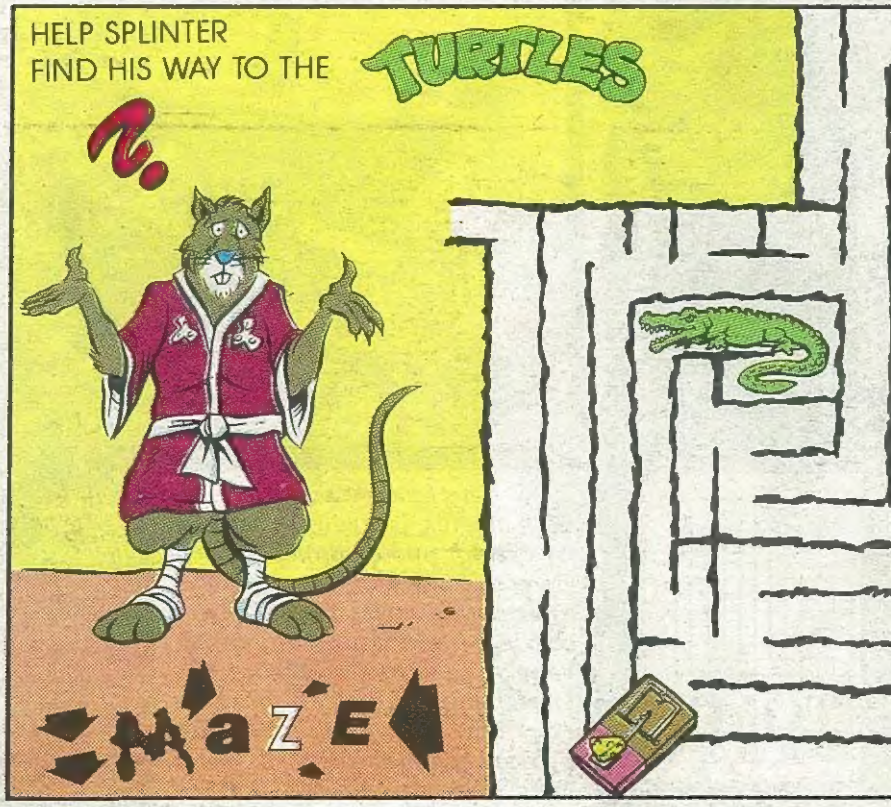
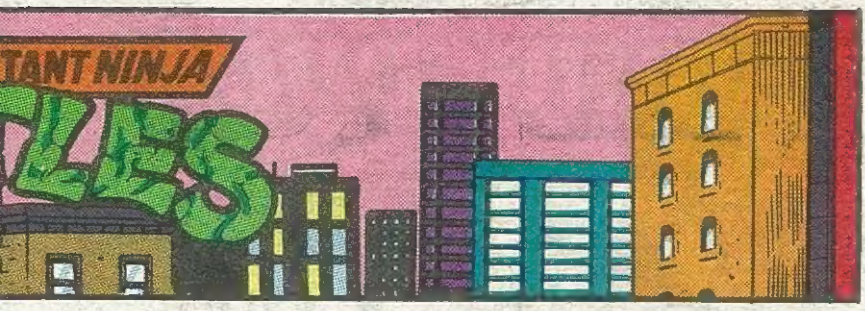
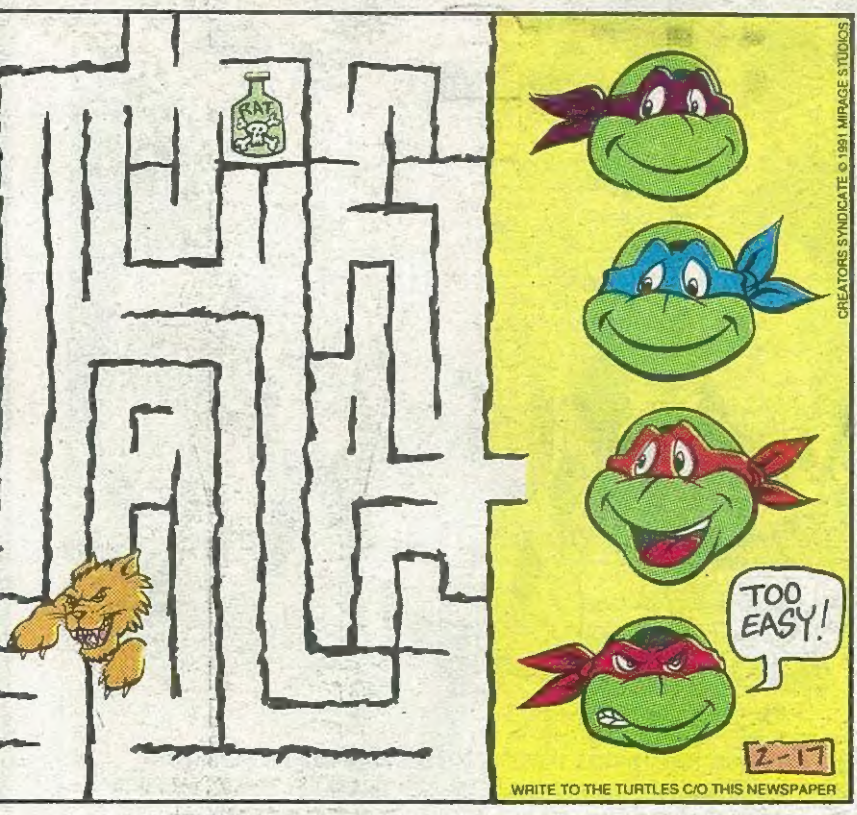

TEENAGE MU
TURT


HELP SPLINTER
FIND HIS WAY TO THE
TURTLES
MAZE


TANT NINJA
TLES


RAT
TOO EASY!
2-17
WRITE TO THE TURTLES C/O THIS NEWSPAPER
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